

Collingwood, Ontario
Federal Building
44 Hurontario Street

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Collingwood Federal Building was built between 1913 and 1915 to the designs of Philip C. Palin, a local architect. It is the property of of Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 83-48.

Reason for Designation

On November 16, 1983, the building was designated Classified because of its architectural significance, because it is a landmark in its town, and because it is remarkably unaltered. It is an outstanding work in the Beaux Arts style, with symmetry and balance of the exterior carried through into the very fine public spaces of the interior. It is marked throughout by a richness of materials and ornament rare in Canada for a building of this type.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of this property is defined primarily by the east façade, and by the layout and decorative treatment of the interior.

The east façade is a two-storey composition surmounted by a gently sloping hip roof. It is symmetrically composed, with a monumental portico over the entrance flanked by colonnaded porches. The work is strongly three-dimensional and is executed in white marble with bronze decorative features. The coffered ceiling of the porch, the upper cornice, and the roof covering are of copper. All elements of this façade must be meticulously maintained and conserved.

The interior on the main level is marked by a carefully orchestrated sequence of spaces highlighted by a central court with a large stained-glass dome. The balanced disposition of spaces about a central axis is enhanced by the use of choice materials - marble, bronze, oak and ornate plasterwork. The upper level also retains evidence of layout but more particularly of original trim and detailing. The two levels are connected by a grand marble staircase with heavy oak handrail, lit by a large stained-glass window.

The interior has undergone a number of alterations, including reduction of the public space and blocking of the lightwell above the coloured glass dome. However, the basis elements survive and must be carefully preserved. Every opportunity should be taken

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to restore or recover aspects of the original design which are presently obscured, including the impact of the dome, the consistent symmetry of the layout, and the consistency of materials and decorative features. All contemporary detail should be sympathetic to the original design.

A number of the original landscape features on the east front, including the oval planting beds, have been removed. Consideration should be given to their reinstatement. Contemporary requirements for signage and accessibility should not mar the integrity of the forecourt. In particular, access should be direct to the frontdoor, and the portico should be visible from the street and not blurred by plantings.

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